

CLAIMS:

1. A method to provide an audio bridge, comprising:

receiving a request to create an audio bridge session over a packet network

5 between a plurality of call terminals using an access number for one of said call

terminals; and

creating said audio bridge session using said access number.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said access number is a telephone number.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said creating comprises:

receiving a plurality of call requests with said access number;

determining whether said access number is a bridge number using a bridge table;

establishing a call connection for each call request if said access number is said

15 bridge number; and

combining each call connection to form said audio bridge session.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said combining comprises:

receiving a stream of packets representing audio information over each call

20 connection;

directing each stream of packets to an intermediate device; and

mixing said streams of packets.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said packet network operates in accordance with a Transport Control Protocol (TCP), Internet Protocol (IP) and H.323 Specification.

6. A method to form an audio bridge over a packet network, comprising:

5 receiving a call request to form a first call connection between a first call terminal and a second call terminal using an access number for said second call terminal;

establishing said first call connection;

receiving a call request to form a second call connection between a third call terminal and said second call terminal;

10 determining whether said access number is a bridge number; and

creating an audio bridge session in accordance with said determination.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said determining comprises:

searching a bridge table for said access number; and

15 determining whether said access number is identified as a bridge number using information stored in said bridge table.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein said creating comprises:

receiving a first stream of packets over said first call connection;

20 transferring said first stream of packets to a multi-point control unit;

establishing said second call connection;

receiving a second stream of packets over said second call connection;

transferring said second stream of packets to said multi-point control unit; and

mixing said first stream of packets and said second stream of packets.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said streams of packets represent audio information.

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10. An audio bridge system, comprising:

a gateway to convert audio information to packets;

a gatekeeper connected to said gateway, said gatekeeper having a bridge table;

and

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a multi-point control unit (MCU) connected to said gatekeeper and said gateway to form an audio bridge session using said bridge table and packets received from said gateway.

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11. The audio bridge system of claim 10, wherein said packets are formed in accordance with the Transport Control Protocol (TCP), Internet Protocol (IP) and H.323 protocol.

12. The audio bridge system of claim 10, further comprising an internal gateway connected to said MCU to convert said packets to audio information.

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13. The audio bridge system of claim 10, wherein said gatekeeper further comprises a user interface to modify said bridge table.

14. An article comprising:

a storage medium;

said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a processor, result in providing an audio bridge by receiving a request to create an audio
5 bridge session over a packet network between a plurality of call terminals using an access number for one of said call terminals, and creating said audio bridge session using said access number.

15. The article of claim 14, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a

10 processor, further result in said creating by receiving a plurality of call requests with said access number, determining whether said access number is a bridge number using a bridge table, establishing a call connection for each call request if said access number is said bridge number, and combining each call connection to form said audio bridge session.

16. The article of claim 15, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a

processor, further result in said combining by receiving a stream of packets representing audio information over each call connection, directing each stream of packets to an intermediate device, and mixing said streams of packets.

17. An article comprising:

a storage medium;

said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a processor, result in forming an audio bridge over a packet network by receiving a call request to form a first call connection between a first call terminal and a second call terminal using an access number for said second call terminal, establishing said first call connection, receiving a call request to form a second call connection between a third call terminal and said second call terminal, determining whether said access number is a bridge number, and creating an audio bridge session in accordance with said determination.

18. The article of claim 17, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in said determining by searching a bridge table for said access number, and determining whether said access number is identified as a bridge number using information stored in said bridge table.

19. The article of claim 17, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in said creating by receiving a first stream of packets over said first call connection, transferring said first stream of packets to a multi-point control unit, establishing said second call connection, receiving a second stream of packets over said second call connection, transferring said second stream of packets to said multi-point control unit, and mixing said first stream of packets and said second stream of packets.